UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/891
31 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 9 OCTOBER 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the letters dated 29 February 1996 which the President of the Security Council addressed to the President of the Republic of Cameroon and the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria relating to the disputed Bakassi peninsula (S/1996/150).

By these letters, the two Governments were informed that the members of the Security Council welcomed my proposal that I should send a fact-finding mission to the Bakassi peninsula and also that the members had requested me in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to continue to monitor this matter closely and to report to the Council on the results of the fact-finding mission and any other significant developments.

After close consultation with the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria, I obtained their agreement to my sending a goodwill mission to the two countries in order to find ways to reduce tension in the disputed area and to improve relations between them while the dispute is under the consideration of the International Court of Justice.

The mandate of the Mission was:

(a) To gather information and formulate suggestions which might bring the parties to adopt confidence-building measures which would help establish an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence among themselves;

(b) To examine with the parties concrete and specific measures designed to reduce tension among them and prevent a deterioration of the situation in the area.

The Mission was led by Mr. Omar Halim, who had had extensive experience of a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations during his service with the Secretariat, and included representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Legal

Affairs. It left New York on 14 September 1996 for Yaoundé and Abuja, where it consulted the authorities of the two countries. After visiting areas of the Bakassi peninsula controlled by both sides, it revisited the respective capitals for further consultations. It also paid a one-day visit to Lomé, where it met with President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, who has been mediating between the two countries. The Mission has reported that it obtained the fullest support and cooperation from all parties.

The two sides each proposed specific measures that could improve relations between them. These included immediate steps to reduce military tensions, as well as confidence-building measures involving cooperation in the economic and cultural fields.

It is my intention to study these proposals in depth and to continue my consultations with the two Governments in order to see which of the measures proposed would be most effective, as well as acceptable to both sides.

As soon as further progress is achieved in these discussions, I will immediately inform the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you could bring the information contained in this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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31 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 31 OCTOBER 1996 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to inform you that your letter of 9 October 1996 (S/1996/891) concerning the recent fact-finding mission to the Bakassi peninsula has been brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

The members of the Security Council are encouraged by the progress reported by the fact-finding mission and fully support your efforts to find ways to reduce the tension in the disputed area and to improve relations between the Republic of Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Nigeria while the dispute is before the International Court of Justice.

The members of the Security Council encourage you to continue your efforts and look forward to further reports of progress achieved towards the settlement of the dispute, including details of the specific measures proposed by the two sides to improve relations between them.

(Signed) Gerardo MARTÍNEZ BLANCO
President of the Security Council

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